the basis by the Law Ministry for arriving at a decision in regard to the transfer to cases from criminal to civil, and in particular, the cases which are more than 5 years old, for disposal by the Fast Track Courts ... ".

Government is examining the matter and has called for detailed information from the State Governments and the Registries of the High Courts with regard to the number of Fast Track Courts, strength in these courts, number of pending criminal cases, availability of infrastructure, etc.

Pending juvenile cases

1002. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that nearly 5,000 cases are pending against juveniles, many of whom have been languishing for over 12 years;

(b) if so, the reasons for such pendency of juvenile cases which affects the future of juveniles; and

(c) the details of steps taken by Government for early closure of long pending cases?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) and (b) Information has been sought from the Registries of the High Courts and the State Governments and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(c) The main responsibility for early closure of juvenile cases rests with the State Governments and the UTs under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 and the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Amendment Act, 2006 which is effective from 23.8.2006 and the courts in which they they have been filed. In so far as the Central Government is concerned, it has under implementation a scheme of comprehensive computerization of all courts in the country with a view to facilitate speedier disposal of cases, including cases filed against juveniles that may be pending in courts.

Village courts

1003. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA : Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government is proposing village courts in the country with an aim to bring justice to the doorsteps of the common man;

(b) if so, whether any Bill has been prepared for this purpose; and

(c) if so, the salient features of the village courts in the country?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The Gram Nyayalayas Bill, 2007 has been introduced in Rajya Sabha on 14th May, 2007 to provide for the establishment of Gram Nyayalayas. Setting up of Gram Nyayalayas would bring to the people of rural areas speedy, affordable and substantial justice.

Mining concessions

1004. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that out of 260 iron mines, for which the Ministry has approved mineral concessions during the period between 2001 to 2007, 172 went to merchant miners mainly for export purpose which is not in the national interest;

(b) whether it is also a fact that an export cess of Rs. 300 levied on per tonne of iron ore is virtually nothing compared to the rise in spot market iron ore prices; and

(c) if so, the steps Government proposes to take to protect and conserve iron ore reserves in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY): (a) Under the National Mineral Policy in 1993, mining for non-fuel and non-atomic minerals has been thrown open for private sector investment and an Indian National or a Company as defined in sub-section 3(1) of the Companies Act, 1956 can undertake mining based on the economic viability of the project. Mining is a stand-alone activity. The Central Government, based on the State Governmnet recommendations, accords prior approval for grant of mineral concessions in terms of the provisions of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 and Rules framed there under. The export of minerals including iron ore is as per the EXIM policy of the Government.

(b) The levy of export cess is a fiscal measure by Government and not linked to the movement of spot prices of iron ore.

(c) The Government is of the view that management of mineral resources is closely integrated with the overall strategy of development of minerals whereby exploitation of minerals is to be guided by long-term national goals and perspectives. The country has sufficient resources of iron ore at 25.25 billion tonnes and these are increasing with further exploration.

Mines of BALCO in Chhattisgarh

†1005. SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI:
SHRI MOTILAL VORA:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Bharat Aluminium Company Ltd. (BALCO) had applied to increase the production by four times in its bauxite mines at Sarguja in Chhattisgarh;

(b) whether it is a fact that importance has not been given to environment and wild life neither in BALCO nor in Sarguja itself by the Company;

(c) the total number of employers working in the Company and out of them the number of local people having participation in it; and

(d) the steps Government is taking to provide employment to local people in the Company and to play active role for environment and wild life?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY): (a) Bharat Aluminium Company Limited (BALCO) has informed that it has applied for increase in production in its Bauxite Mines at Sarguja in Chhattisgarh from 4.5 lakh metric tones per annum (MTPA) to 7.5 lakh MTPA.

(b) BALCO has informed that it is giving utmost importance to environment. Moreover, mining and other operations are being done in terms of the mining plan, as approved by the Indian Brueau of Mines in compliance with Environmental Laws.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.